

January 1987

TWIN CITIES ATARI INTEREST GROUP

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Taig/Space BBS 612/522-2687

Membership Renewal

You may renew your membership at any TAIG meeting, or send a check for \$15.00 (made out to "TAIG"), and the completed membership form in this newsletter.

Mail to

Nathan Block
2656 Georgia Ave. South
St. Louis Park, Mn. 55426

Newsletter Exchange & Article Submission

If you represent another Atari Users Group that wishes to exchange newsletters, please mail a copy of your newsletter to Cory Johnson.

Articles should be submitted in standard text files, such as Atariwriter, Hometext or Speedscript. If you don't own a wordprocessor you can enter an article into BASIC using REM statements. Or, send written or typed text (make any diagrams or schematics legible also, we can't reprint what we can't read) to:

Cory Johnson
1835 Shadyview Circle
Plymouth, Mn. 55447

Articles may also be dropped off at Wizard's Work on County Rd. 18 & County Rd. 9 in Plymouth.

Any storage media will be returned at the next meeting.

Articles may also be uploaded to the BBS. Please leave a short description in the FIS system, and label the article as such when the BBS prompts you. The BBS Number is 612/522-2687

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Presidents notes for January 1987

Well, this has been a busy month for TAIG. A lot of members have chipped in to help us with the membership drive for January. I would like to thank all of those people who chipped in and attended the special meetings, delivered posters, placed ads in the local newspapers and so forth. I would also like to thank Alpha-Tech, User Friendly, and Wizards Work for donating software to be raffled at the January meeting. It is really nice to have local business' chip in and support us, you should keep that in mind when you go shopping this spring with those income tax refunds. Also remember that for the month of January only, we have reduced the membership rate to \$10 instead of the usual \$15. If you know anyone who might be interested in the group, tell them about this great deal. This month we are also planning to have 3 ST and 3 XE systems running, so if you know anybody who has been thinking of buying an ATARI system, tell to stop by. It will be a great opportunity to see the systems run and maybe convince them that ATARI is the best way to go.

There has been a lot of changes on the BBS this month. As most of you have heard by now, the 10 MEG Harddrive is back! This gives us back all of those great functions that are TAIG exclusives, like: DigiPictures, Weather, Story Time, Random Thoughts, Surveys, ect... We are constantly upgrading the system, and have some ideas that will be implemented in the near future. Keep Watching! We now have a working copy of VModem, with will allow you to View Digital Pictures ONLINE. The old VisHayes worked, but had problems at 1200 Bps. The new software corrects this problem, and adds some features that the old VisHayes was missing. If you are using a 1030 modem, we have Digi1030, which has been around for a couple of years. This feature is a hold over from the old ATARI BARN days. Another hold over is the Weather function. Everybody loved this one. We got a lot of comments from people calling from other states, especially when it said -20 Deg. with 30 mile per hour winds from the north! The new Weather function will only have Temperature, the wind speed and direction take up too much program space. My favorite new function is the Survey section. It allows 8 surveys with 10 answers each. It allows users to setup their own surveys and monitor them. We plan to use this area to poll members about ideas we have for running the club and the BBS. Be sure to watch this area for new surveys. We are also adding message base 16, a ST base.

I hope that everyone had a good holiday, and let's get 1987 off to a good start. Show your support by attending the January meeting Sunday January 25 at 7:00PM at the St. Louis Park Recreation Center, 5005 West 36th Street, St. Louis Park, Mn.

Minutes of the December 21, 1986 TAIG Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Old business:

The TAIG membership drive is going to be at the January meeting. Advertisements for the drive will be placed in area newspapers, on cable TV public service announcements, and fliers will be distributed to area computer stores. Volunteers are needed to distribute fliers to area retailers. All members are asked to put messages on any local bulletin boards they call if none are present advertising the drive. Annual membership dues will be discounted for new members during the month of January. A mailing will be sent to all past members urging them to return to TAIG. Several members volunteered to bring both eight and sixteen bit systems for demos at the meeting. There were also several volunteers to provide refreshments. No set list of demos was presented, so if you have a demo you would like to run, or want to write one, call the BBS or one of the officers with your ideas.

It was resolved that TAIG should start an Atari ST Special Interest Group to promote the use of Atari ST computers, and disseminate information related to them. This SIG would supplement the eight bit activities of TAIG, and it is not intended that the Atari ST computers become the primary focus of TAIG.

The above resolution was voted on and passed unanimously.

The bylaws as printed in the December newsletter were voted on again and passed, making them official.

News from the world of computers:

Activision is sponsoring a coupon promotion for their software packages. Coupon books for money off on software can be picked up at area retailers.

Alpha Tech donated a copy of SSI's "Gettysburg: The Turning Point" to TAIG. The program was raffled with all proceeds going to TAIG. The raffle brought in \$46. Thanks to Roger for his generosity.

Rumor has it that if enough users clamor for it, the file format on the soon to be released eight bit 3.5" floppy disk drives might be made compatible with the ST file format. This would simplify file transfers between the two machines immensely. If you have any strong feelings on this topic, write a letter to Atari Corp, or give their BBS a call.

Craig Peterson gave a presentation on PC Pursuit, a long distance service providing access to networked cities to modem users for a flat monthly fee of \$25 during off peak hours. PC Pursuit currently allows 300/1200 baud access, with 2400 baud in the offing.

Other TAIG News:

A set of Introduction to Programming cassettes was donated to the group. These tapes will be added to the software library.

This month's DOM includes:

Documentation on a battery backup for XL/XE computers which uses the parallel port and can be installed without voiding the computer's warranty.

A BASIC program unprotector

A kaleidoscope demo program

A Commodore graphics convertor for files downloaded in Comnie format

A binary file load address scanner

Steve implores all members to contribute programs for the DOM, as all DOM material has been coming from other user groups, Compuserve, Delphi, etc.

Editors Notes by Cory Johnson READ THIS!

Due to an unforeseen problem, we have had to postpone the open house until the February meeting. The executive board decided that Taig really couldn't compete with the Super Bowl, so we will have just the normal January meeting on the 25th.

BUT we will have a lot of hardware there, so this month will basically be a dry run of the open house. Sorry for the confusion, but it's the NFL's fault.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO READ ANYMORE IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.

But it'd be nice if you would. It's been a busy time for both Atari and Taig. Atari has redesigned the ST series, developed a laser printer and developed an IBM PC clone. All were announced at the CES. Unfortunately, there was little, if any noise about the 8 bit line. The 80 column adaptor is still being promised, but with no dates for shipment, as are the 8 bit 3.5" disk drives, and the 300/1200 bps modem. The vapor around the vaporware really doesn't seem to be clearing does it? Taig began organizing a membership drive that was supposed to climax with the January meeting, well, what's another month. We'll make it the February meeting. If you know of anyone with an Atari that needs any help or support, please refer them to Taig, that's what we're here for.

Carl Hartness took over the responsibility of the paper library, we'll finally have Taig's books and magazines at the next meeting. Thanks Carl! The paper library is a great resource, and it has been expanded by Carl allowing us access to his own personal library. Let's be prompt on returning the books and magazines, and please, treat them even better than if they were your own.

The Pawn (A review for the ST) By David Stengel

This is a review of an adventure game called "The Pawn" just recently released for the ST. I guess, to be truthful, what really sold me on the game at first were the brilliant graphic screens it had. Obviously digitized cartoon photos, or computer artwork done by a masochist. Along with the excellent graphics, comes an excellent adventure in itself.

Before I head into describing the game, let me tell you what you get with it. Books (and lots of them). You get an instruction book that tell you the general background of what an adventure game is. You get a reference book containing special commands, etc. You get another book telling you the history of the township you are presently in, it's rulers, townfolk, etc. Now, obviously, if you know anything at all about adventures, you realize you don't have to read all these books to start the adventure (but it does help you to read them sometime in your life). In the back of one of the books is a section providing clues in solving certain puzzles (not all the puzzles of course). The clues are in special code, so it's kind of a pain in the butt to use (preventing you from trying to cheat you way through the whole game). Sometimes the computer insists you have a certain amount of points before it gives you a clue for a specific puzzle.

The adventure itself takes place durring what could be the middle ages, but since you're dressed in jeans it's highly questionable what time period you're in. But you start out with one objective, which is to get out of this particular township. It will not tell you why at first, but does it really matter anyway? The game has some interesting characters, and a very good parser. You have a choice of either an 80 column view, or a 53 column view. The game works on both colour and monochrome screen (and has a special editor for monochrome users allowing a sharper picture). The game also hides the picture and the user can access it by pulling down with the mouse like a window shade, and then move it out of his way when he's done looking at the scenery (allowing for either an all text adventure, or graphics and text adventure).

The graphics and other little creature features mentioned above, not to mention the quality of the adventure itself, make the game very well worth the \$45 (retail) price tag on it (you may be able to find it for less, but this is what I paid). Next month, if no one else beats me to it, I'll review the Apshai Trilogy for the ST.

Well, now that the BBS is back on the 10 meg harddrive, things are going alot smoother. The validation process is alot easier now, and no one should have problems getting validated within 2-3 days. Pseudonyms are no longer allowed on the BBS, so if you were using an alias you will find that your password is gone. Some of the local sysops still have theirs, but I will be talking to them and letting them know that we need to have them change their names.

Since we have the hard drive back I figured it was time to add some features to the BBS. The first was to add the survey system. This survey system can hold up to 8 different surveys, each survey is given a name, two lines of text to pose a question, and up to 10 different choices can be made available. If you start a survey, you don't have to have all 10 choices, you can put in only two if you like. Other users can add choices to any survey. Your name will be put at the top of the survey indicating you started it, and the date it was started is also given. Only sysops and the person who started the survey can delete it. There are limitations to the length of the choices and the length of the name of the survey, so keep these as short as possible,

The File Information System is running correctly again, so if you upload any files, please answer all the questions accurately, and leave a good description of what the program does. The File Information System was totally re-programmed, so now it should never take more than 2-3 seconds for the BBS to locate the program you are looking for. Also, you can do searches in the FIS, if you enter the letter 'D' at the filename prompt, you will be shown all files starting with the letter D. You can then step through each file, looking at the descriptions. We will be adding KEYWORD searches to the FIS sometime in the future, so for instance you would be able to search all the descriptions for keywords like RAMDISK, or MUSIC, or whatever, much like Compuserve.

When you look at the files available for downloading, they will be shown to you in alphabetical order, a nice looking list now anyways.

Any questions about the BBS? Send me your questions, and I will try to answer them, this will give Cory something to put in the newsletter.

We added an ST message base, so if you are a member of TAIG and own an ST, let me know so I can get your password set up so you can get to the message base. There is a survey up right now, concerning 8-bit Atari owners access to the ST base, the decision to allow 8-biters on the message base will be based mostly on the response to this survey.

The bulletin function has been changed on the BBS. When you enter B from the main menu, you will be asked if you want to see, SPACE bulletins, TAIG bulletins, or both. The BBS will then go through and send all files in the directory, if you want to abort the sending of a bulletin, press Control C, the BBS will then send the next file in the directory. This should help us get current information in the bulletins.

Here are some things to look forward to on the BBS, Vmodem a DigiPicture terminal program (300/1200 Bps), a big data base, variable password lengths, up to 10 characters, a large OTHER BBS listing, outdoor temperature information, BlipVerts, Expanded help files, a user database, and dare he say it? 20 Meg????? Rumors, rumors, rumors...

**Tired of
ordinary
telecommunications?**

The Taig/Space BBS is online!

300/1200 bps

24 hours

7 days a week

Over 10 MEGABYTE of storage

16 message bases

Private E-mail

Online DIGI-PICTURES*

Huge, menu driven database

User defined survey system,

up to 8 surveys online

**All this, and still the largest
upload/download section in the area.**

**Your Taig membership entitles you
to access to the BBS.**

(612) 522-2687

*Digi-Pictures requires the use of V-modem or Digi-1030, which are special telecommunications programs available through Taig.

The Taig/Space BBS is run jointly by Taig and Space. The software is written, supported and copyrighted by Tom Green.

We do not allow pseudonyms, phreaking, or any illegal activity to take place upon the BBS.

Atari Announces New Products at CES

Las Vegas, NV, Jan. 8 -- In a dramatic press conference held this morning at the Consumer Electronics Show, spokesmen for the Atari Corporation introduced a panoply of new products for 1987. Highlights included three significant new additions to Atari's flagship ST line of high-performance personal computers, a revolutionary low-cost laser printer, and an IBM PC-compatible personal computer of radically new design.

The new ST computers, dubbed "Mega STs 1, 2, and 4" incorporate one, two, and four megabytes of RAM, respectively. Encased in a newly-designed system unit with integral 800K microfloppy drive and detachable, ergonomic keyboard, the new machines are visibly different from Atari's current 520ST and 1040ST models, while remaining 100% compatible with them. Additional enhancements to the Mega machines include a battery-backed realtime clock, internal mounting space for an additional circuit board, and full external routing of the 68000 bus, making their architecture "wide open" for further enhancements. "We took all our customer's suggestions on how we could improve the ST, and incorporated them in this series," said Neil Harris, Atari's Director of Marketing Communications. Delivery of the new machines, via computer specialty stores, is expected to begin shortly at a price-point of "about \$1000."

The new Atari laser printer, shown in a prototype version, will match or exceed the performance of present laser printer systems while costing only about half as much -- about \$1500.

Atari has accomplished this enormous cost-saving by exploiting the power inherent in their ST computers. Coupled with a 2- or 4-megabyte Mega ST, the laser printer will form the output stage of a desktop publishing system costing less than \$3000 total.

Atari's new IBM PC-compatible machine, the Atari PC, is a radical departure from present "PC clone" designs, offering top-of-the-line compatibility and features at a record-breaking price of under \$500. Housed in a system unit similar to the Mega ST with integral 5-1/4" floppy drive and detachable XT-style keyboard, the PC/XT compatible Atari PC sports 512K RAM standard (expandable to 640K on the motherboard), an additional 256K of graphics-dedicated RAM, a custom graphics chip providing enhanced EGA, CGA, IBM Monochrome, and Hercules graphics capabilities, and a Microsoft compatible mouse. It operates at the IBM standard 4.77 Mhz or at a high-speed 8 Mhz "turbo mode," and provides for the addition of an 8087 math coprocessor at either speed. A monochrome monitor designed for use with the Atari PC was also announced. Costing under \$200, the monitor supports all Atari PC graphics modes, including the high-resolution, multicolor EGA mode in grey-scale. Shipments of the Atari PC will begin in March. The new products -- perceived by some as the fulfillment of promises made over a year ago by Atari CEO Jack Tramiel -- are

universally hailed as milestones for the Atari Corporation. One informed onlooker commented: "It's as if Atari, in one fell swoop, had stepped to the leading edge in three markets: high-performance workstations, desktop publishing systems, and the lucrative PC-compatible game. They're going to be the company to watch in 1987."

With somewhat less fanfare, Atari also announced a new slimline 20-megabyte Winchester drive for its ST line, incorporating an extra port for daisy-chaining with other DMA-compatible peripherals, such as the new laser printer. At the same time, Atari announced price reductions on existing ST models. A 520ST CPU will now be available for under \$300 retail, a 1040ST with monochrome monitor for around \$799, and a 1040ST with color monitor for around \$999.

Low-cost Atari Laser Printer Promises "Revolution" in Desktop Publishing

Las Vegas, NV Jan. 8 -- A prototype laser printer, being demonstrated by Atari here at CES, will form the basis for a full-featured desktop publishing system costing less than half the price of systems built around competing architectures. Designed to interface with Atari's ST line of high-performance personal computers, the new laser printer will be taken to market later this year at the astoundingly low price of around \$1500.

"Desktop publishing" -- the use of personal computers to produce high-quality printed matter -- has become a burgeoning industry over the past two years. Powerful, graphics-oriented personal computers such as the Atari ST are now routinely used in typesetting, page design, paste-up, and -- in combination with high-resolution laser printers -- for producing high-quality, "camera ready" output. However, largely because the price of laser printers has remained high, the cost of a desktop publishing system is still out of reach for many.

By redesigning the standard laser printer to take advantage of the power latent in the ST line -- particularly the new Mega STs -- Atari hopes to make full-featured desktop publishing a reality at less than \$3000 for a complete system; about what a conventional laser printer costs today. Designed to interface with the ST's high-speed DMA (Direct Memory Access) port and incorporating a standard laser "engine," the Atari laser printer will produce rapid throughput at 300 dots-per-inch resolution. Though technical details have not yet been revealed, Shiraz Shivji, head of Atari's hardware engineering division, states that Atari "has designed an admirably flexible system that includes all the advantages and few of the disadvantages of present laser printer are in the quality of the letters. The new system will be able to handle multiple fonts and standard page-description languages at the discretion of software. Moreover, adapting present software to use the laser printer's full capabilities should be fairly simple, providing such software has been written

in conformance with GEM standards."

The Atari PC -- "More than just another pretty clone."

Las Vegas, NV Jan. 8 -- The audience at this morning's CES press conference was stunned to learn that Atari Corporation, long a manufacturer of proprietary, high-performance home and personal computers, is planning to market an IBM PC-compatible machine. Industry insiders, however, were quick to note that Atari has always been known for bringing state-of-the-art products to market at low prices and for driving the industry by finding and staking out new turf. In this context, it is less surprising that Atari has chosen to bring their special brand of competition where, for the moment, the competition is hottest. "We saw no reason to ignore the fact that there are profits to be made in the IBM PC-compatible marketplace at this time." Says Neil Harris, Atari's Director of Marketing Communications, "especially since it is a different market than the one we are addressing with our high-end, flagship ST systems."

Presently, the PC-compatible industry is moving in two directions. At the low end, a group of more-or-less anonymous clone makers are packaging "bare bones" systems for the mail-order market. Buyers of such machines often find that they must add several hundred dollars worth of extra hardware before their "bargain systems" can accomplish useful work. At the high end, clone makers such as Leading Edge and Compaq are providing more complete systems than IBM itself. At prices starting at around \$1200 and up, however, these machines can only be considered bargains in comparison with the even higher cost of going with Big Blue.

In designing their PC, Atari management decided to run counter to both dominant trends. Instead, they reasoned that by applying new technology and old-fashioned manufacturing leverage, they could bring to market a fully-loaded, state-of-the-art system -- a "here's everything you'll ever need" PC -- at a price-point low enough to undercut even the "el cheapo" clone makers.

They appear to have succeeded. The Atari PC, which will retail for "around \$500," is a compact and elegant system loaded with features not found on systems costing literally thousands of dollars more. Measuring about 22" square by only 2" high, the Atari PC system unit includes a built-in, half-height 5-1/4" diskette drive and integral power supply. An XT-style keyboard attaches to the unit via a coiled cable. A second 3-1/2" drive, capable of reading disks in either ST or IBM format, can be attached externally. But that's just the beginning.

The Atari PC comes with 512K of RAM, expandable to 640K via sockets on the motherboard. Standard serial, parallel, and combination video ports, and an ST-style disk port, are all included. A mouse port, based on the Microsoft INPORT chip, is built in, and an ST-type

mouse is included with the system. Thus, unlike competing-compatible systems, the Atari PC will be able to run PC GEM, Microsoft Windows, and mouse-based programs like Microsoft Word, right out of the box.

The Atari PC employs an Intel 8086 microprocessor which can run at 4.77 Mhz and in an enhanced, 8 Mhz, "turbo mode." An 8087 math coprocessor, running at either speed, can be added via a socket on the motherboard.

As one would expect, Atari has paid special attention the Atari PC's graphics capabilities. Most low-cost PC compatibles support only the IBM Monochrome mode, and are thus text-only systems. A few of the more expensive clones include IBM Color Graphics Adapter (CGA) and/or Hercules monochrome graphics capabilities. IBM Enhanced Graphics Adapter (EGA) 640 x 350 x 16-color graphics capabilities have, in the past, only been accessible via expensive upgrades to a system's display circuitry and the purchase of costly high-resolution monitors. Moreover, purchasers of the supposedly downward-compatible EGA enhancements have often been disappointed to discover that IBM-style EGA isn't as downward compatible as they hoped -- some CGA software won't run.

Yet, Atari has managed to shoehorn IBM Monochrome, CGA, EGA, and Hercules graphics capabilities into the Atari PC. Besides the fact that the Atari PC is the only PC-compatible to include EGA graphics as a standard feature, Atari's Shiraz Shivji notes: "our EGA is completely downward-compatible with CGA. As a result, users will experience no compatibility problems when using the lower graphics modes." What's more, Atari has announced a \$200 monochrome green screen monitor for use with the Atari PC that can display all its graphics modes; including the high resolution EGA color mode, using intensity gradients (gray scales) to represent colors. This is the first monitor that incorporates these capabilities. "The monitor is intelligent," says Shivji, "and recognizes the frequency of signals coming from the combination video port, adjusting itself appropriately to display whatever kind of text or graphics the machine produces."

The Atari PC is virtually 100% compatible with software available for the IBM PC and XT. While its slimline housing provides no room for mounting internal circuit cards, it is doubtful that more than a handful of users will require more capabilities than the machine provides in its off-the-shelf configuration. For those who do, Atari intends to provide an external expansion box in the near future.

Flagships of the Atari Line: New Mega ST Workstations Offer "PowerWithout the Price" for Desktop Publishing, Professional Applications.

Las Vegas, NV Jan. 8 -- Atari's new Mega ST 1, 2,

and 4 computers, announced today at the Consumer Electronics Show, create new personal computer price/performance standards -- standards that the rest of the computer industry will be hard-pressed to meet or beat in 1987. Available starting at \$1000, the new machines will offer up to four megabytes of RAM memory: sixteen times that of most standard, high-end workstations.

The Mega ST is housed in an independent "system unit," about 22" square by 2" high, containing the CPU, a double-sided floppy drive and an internal power supply. The ST's normal complement of ports, including those for DMA, RS-232 serial, parallel, disk, video, cartridge, MIDI, mouse, and joystick, plus an additional port for connecting the detachable, ergonomic keyboard, are included. The Mega ST system unit is reinforced to support a monitor and can be stacked with other components -- notably the enhanced 20-megabyte hard disk drive. Even fully loaded, it will take up far less room than present ST configurations.

The sleek new Mega chassis contains a redesigned ST motherboard, sporting significant enhancements. A battery-backed clock calendar is now standard equipment, eliminating the present need to set time manually on power-up. The clock runs off alkaline penlight batteries -- more easily obtainable and less expensive than "coin-type" lithium cells.

The Mega ST architecture is "wide open," permitting internal and external expansion with add-on circuit cards. The new design provides full access to the 68000 bus and power supply, and fixtures have been provided for installing a circuit board inside the case. Further expansion is possible by routing the bus outside to an external card-cage. RAM expansion up to 16 megabytes and networking capabilities will soon be available from Atari as low-cost add-ons.

The Mega ST's detachable keyboard is designed to the highest ergonomic standards for convenience and ease of use. Connected to the system unit by a coiled cable, the new keyboard can be held comfortably in the lap. When placed on the desktop, adjustable legs fold down to support the unit at the preferred typing angle. Internally, the keyboard has been enhanced with high-quality key switches for improved tactile and auditory feedback, better "feel," and increased reliability.

Where does the Mega line stand in relation to other Atari products? "They're our flagships," says Atari spokesman Neil Harris. "The Mega STs represent Atari's continued strong support of the ST architecture." They are also physical proof that Atari has been listening to its users and taking their advice seriously. "Most of the improvements we've made in the basic ST design have been taken from 'wish lists' that have come out of our dialogue with users over the past year." Harris says.

With vastly expanded memory, an open architecture, a more compact configuration with integrated peripherals, and an improved keyboard, the Mega machines are clearly intended as "professional" computers. Networking capabilities and sufficient memory for running multiple, co-resident applications,

plus the promise of desktop publishing (in combination with the upcoming Atari laser printer) are sure to make the Mega ST an office favorite in the coming year.

Editor Notes cont.

I'm not going to say anything about the BBS, other than it's a really sweet system, and you're really missing out on another great resource if you aren't using it. We've gone from a 48K 400 with 4 floppies to a 130XE with a 10 meg harddrive in less than a year, and the software Tom has written is the best in the country.

I have been receiving newsletters from all over, and have been noticing a growing problem. Not giving credit where credit is due in some cases, or down right plagiarism in others. There was recently a slip involving an article published in Taig that appeared in another newsletter, word for word the same, but with a different author's name on it. Now this doesn't hurt Taig as such, but it does hurt the original author. Imagine seeing your work with someone else's name on it.

Now that I'm off my soap box, I'm going to do exactly what I was just grumbling about. I captured the Atari news items that appear later in the newsletter from the Doghouse BBS, but they had no bylines on them. I called around and couldn't find bylines on any of them. So, as soon as I find out who wrote them, I'll publish the name, but I'll run the news now.

Also, if you go to one of the merchants who advertise in our newsletter, please tell them you saw their ad. We've had some financial problems recently, and many of those problems arise from the newsletter not paying for itself through advertising. So, support the local merchants, and they'll support you, and their advertising can support Taig's newsletter. What comes around goes around and around and around. So don't sneeze near me.

Changes are also afoot with the newsletter. Now that Taig has created an ST sig, we will divide the newsletter equally between the two machines. We can have a 12 page newsletter, and barely scrape under the 22 cent postage cut off. So, that means 10 pages of text, as not much can be accomplished on the cover. So, 5 pages ST, 5 pages 8 bit. Sounds fair enough. Now, we need your articles to fill those pages.

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The CES was a smashing success. There were over 5000 exhibits ranging from magazines to video systems. There were over 110,000 people participating at the show. The show was so large that it took me over 3 hours to weed my way through the exhibits over to the Atari section. The Atari display was about 2000 square feet display the entire line of Atari products. (2600, 7800, 65XE, 130XE, 520ST, 1040ST, ST1, ST2, ST4, Atari PC's, Atari Modems, Hard Drive, and the Lazer printer). Along with the computers, I saw many of the 3rd party software manufacturers. Such as (Xanth Computers with Midi-Maze, Batteries Included with Degas Elite and Tom Hudson Demonstrating it, Timeworks with Word Writer - Data Manager - Swift Calc, Exlent software with Typesetter ST, Aegis with Animator, and many others. The most interesting displays were the new hardware from Atari.C

ATARI PC's

The Atari PC is a very interesting piece. The comes with a long list of built in features, a 8.0/4.77 MHz 8086 CPU / socketed for the 8087 Co-Processor. 512K system RAM expandable to 640K on motherboard. 256K dedicated to display RAM. Built-in 5 1/4" DS/SD 360K disk drive. Built-in EGA, CGA, Hercules, and monochrome capability. Built-in standard parallel and RS232C serial port. Mouse. High resolution EGA monitor. Shaped like the Epson and leading Edge styling. Priced at \$699.99

ATARI ST1-4's

A new shape to the ST line of computers. The shape is also very similar to the Epson and the Leading Edge computer line . With the detachable keyboard. The model numbers range from the ST-1 to the ST-4. The numbers coincide with amount of available RAM. ST1 meaning one meg, and so on to the ST-4 for meaning 4 Megabytes. Prices ranging from \$1000.00 to \$2700.00

ATARI Lazer Printer

The lazer printer to be released in March as I was told. Very nice looking piece at that. The Quality of the print, I found to be very good to the naked eye. Although the quality was not as sharp as the more expensive lazer printers. Definitely worth the price. The lazer printer will sell for \$1500.00

ATARI 300/1200 Modem

I did see the modem. The modem is a true Hayes compatible modem. With all the lights, and on-board speaker. If you don't have a modem yet, I would definitely wait for this one. I do not mean just for the Atari computer owners. It will work on any computer. The modem will sell for \$150.00

Aegis

A new graphics animator. Easy to use, the animator will work with degas and neo picture drawing program. It is a full GEM based program with many features. (rotate x & z access, follow a line, color change, etc.) The demo's are very impressive, a Dinosaurs walking across the screen with a background trees and mountains. Also a helicopter landing. This is a definite must if you have Degas or Degas Elite and or Neochrome. This program sells for \$79.95

Batteries Included

Tom Hudson was demonstrating the famous Degas Elite. I learned a great deal from our conversation. G-DOS is the headache of Tom's Degas Elite. The DOS is at best useable said, Tom. But, do think it is poorly written. In regards to the assign.sys file. I will upload some information to your BBS. down the road I will have a program to create the assign.sys files. So expect to see him as a caller in the very near future.

MidiPlay

Is a real-time record/playback system. Supports all 16 channels of a Midi. Also will store up to 200,000 notes/events - about 3 hours of music. The menu is very easy to use too, The screen turn a red when you are recording, green when you are playing it back. All the available commands are shown on the screen with a full midi keyboard showing the keystrokes while playing and recording and many other features. So simple to use, I feel you do not even need to read the manual. Sells for \$49.95.

Publishing Partner

Was released at the show. Loads graphics, many different types of fonts. The color and monochrome are supported. But, Monochrome is recommended. Very easy to use - I did not need the manual at all or any type of help ! The program sells for \$149.95.

Stop in to Alpha-Tech and see pictures of the new ST line.....

Roger Hamilton



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**ATARI Sales &
SERVICE**

A few months ago I received a letter from Regent Software offering me Regent Word II as an upgrade of Regent Spell which I had purchased some time ago for \$27.95. Now I don't normally buy software without at least trying it out, but I had been happy with Regent Spell and the Retail Price was to be \$99 when it came out. So I decided to give it a try.

A month later I saw Regent was offering Word II as an upgrade to 1st Word owners for \$35. I started to get worried, since 1st Word was still a freebee.

Well it finally arrived and as is my habit I read the manual first. I do this because I feel this will allow me to use new software to the fullest and shorten the learning curve. This as you will see was my 2nd mistake the 1st was sending for it.

The manual starts out claiming to be the most state of the art method of word processing. Horay I though at last variable spacing for my DX-10, indexes, footnotes, and maybe Expanded text like ST Writer provides. By the time I got through the manual I was really depressed. Not only did it not have the features I wanted, according to the manual all function like "Center Line, Bold, Underline etc had to be done with the mouse from the desktop. I later found out that this is not true and it appears that the manual was finished before the program.

But enough of my disappointments lets get on with what it can do and can not do. The display is a typical GEM screen with Desktop headings of: Desk File Edit Search Style Special Print. The typing is displayed as it will appear on the printed sheet when not right justified. Justification is possible but is only reflected on the printed page. You cannot resize the text window however and only one document is allow at a time.

An information line something like ST Writer is at the top of the 1st page and looks like this:

Start New Page=YES Right Justify=NO
LM1=10 LM2=10 RM=75 LS=1.0 Font=0 Page #=1

Not only is these line informative, but if you click on them you will be prompted for the new information. And you can change any of the parameters including headers and footers as often as you like.

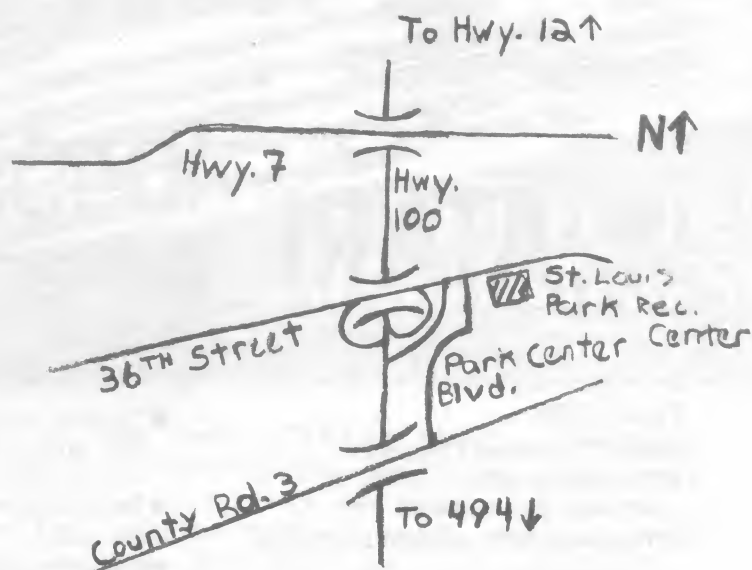
Word II also features a build in spelling checker which only checks the whole document when requested. Its basically Regent Spell incorporated into the same program. In fact done it even better this time around.

File: lets you Load, Save, Start new document. And also Quit.

Edit: Center, Delete, Insert Line, Block Right, Start, End, Paste Block

Search: Standard search and replace functions.

Style: Bold, Italics, Sub & Superscript, Underline and Insert Mode.



Just where does Taig meet?

Taig normally meets on the last Sunday of each month (please call one of the officers for conformation) at the St. Louis Park Recreation Center (See map) 5005 West 36th Street. St. Louis Park Minnesota.

**TAIG Welcomes Our
New Members For January.
Jim & Cathy Johnson**

Special: Calculator (activates a desk accessory style calculator), Go to Line (can be used with programs to jump to a specified line number for editing, might make a good editor), Insert Ruler, Delete Ruler, Show Page Breaks, Word Count, Help (shows control keys like ^C=Center Line), Spell (activates Spelling Checker) Show Returns, Alphabetize (does sort by paragraph, handy for lists)

Print: Print Document, Global Format (Page size and Margins), Printer Type (One of 20 printer including Disk, Other may be used with special printer driver program to handle other printers).

Regent Word II seems to have problems with desk accessories, It has a tendency to bomb whenever using the desktop when desk accessories are present. I have not been able to include print control characters with in the text and when centering text it has the unpleasant habit of repositioning the cursor at the beginning of the line centered requiring you to move to the end of the line before doing a carriage return. These and other problems put Word II low on my list.



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- ROM cartridge port.
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Return Address Only!
Twin Cities ATARI Interest Group
4309 Suncliff Road
Eagan Mn. 55122



Next TAIG Meeting
Sunday, January 25th
TAIG 7:00 pm

Open house & Swap meet
coming in February.